

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BUCAR 02173 241131Z
ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 EB-08 ISO-00 /021 W
-----241142Z 074318 /14
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FM AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2373
USDOC WASHDC PRIORITY

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USDOC FOR BEWT

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: SWEL, EAID, RO
SUBJECT: ROMANIAN EARTHQUAKE: REQUESTED USG INTERVENTION IN
REESTABLISHMENT OF DAMAGED COMPUTER CENTER

1. SUMMARY. AT DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER PACOSTE'S
REQUEST, AMBASSADOR AND FRG AMBASSADOR BALKEN WITH
EMBOFFS INSPECTED COMPUTER CENTER OF MINISTRY OF
TRANSPORTATION AND TELECOMMUNICATIONS WHICH WAS ALMOST
TOTALLY DESTROYED BY MARCH 4 EARTHQUAKE. DEPUTY TRANS-
PORTATION MINISTER BURADA'S APPEAL FOR USG INTERVENTION
IN RE-EQUIPING CENTER IS REPORTED AND DISCUSSED BELOW.
END SUMMARY.

2. MINISTER PACOSTE LAST WEEK ISSUED SIMULTANEOUS
INVITATIONS TO AMERICAN AND FRG EMBASSIES FOR THEIR
AMBASSADORS TO INSPECT EARTHQUAKE DAMAGE AT COMPUTER
CENTER OF MINISTRY OF TRANSPORTATION AND TELECOMMUNICATIONS.
AMBASSADORS WITH EMBOFFS MADE AN INSPECTION TOUR MARCH 15,
ACCOMPANIED BY DEPUTY MINISTER OF TRANSPORTATION
BURADA AND COMPUTER CENTER DIRECTOR MIHUITA.

3. QUICK OBSERVATION REVEALED THAT FIRST-FLOOR STRUCTURAL
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PAGE 02 BUCAR 02173 241131Z

COLUMNS OF BUILDING'S MIDDLE SECTION HAD CRUMBLED, JUST
UNDER THE CAPITALS, CAUSING UPPER STORIES TO PANCAKE.
INSTALLED UNIVAC 1106 AND SEIMANS 1100-20 SYSTEMS WERE
REMOVED FROM WRECKAGE BUT TOTALLY IRREPARABLE ACCORDING
TO BURADA.

4. BURADA SAID MINISTRY'S COMPUTING REQUIREMENTS

EXCEEDED WHAT COULD BE SHIFTED TO OTHER CENTERS, AND THAT ALL EQUIPMENT WAS OF FOREIGN ORIGIN SO WORK COULD NOT CONTINUE WITHOUT URGENT COOPERATION OF OUTSIDE SUPPLIERS. THE UNIVAC IS A REAL-TIME SYSTEM IN ADVANCED EXPERIMENTAL STAGE FOR NATION-WIDE CONTROL OF ROLLING STOCK. THE SEIMANS COMPUTER IS PROGRAMED FOR BATCH WORK. IN UNIVAC'S CASE, NEGOTIATIONS FOR EXPANDED SYSTEMS REPORTEDLY IN PROGRESS AND HAD BEEN EXPECTED TO CONCLUDE IN MAY.

5. BURADA NEXT ASKED AMBASSADORS TO INTERVENE WITH RESPECTIVE GOVERNMENTS AND SUPPLIERS "IN ORDER TO FIND A MUTUAL SOLUTION" TO ROMANIA'S DISASTER RECOVERY NEEDS IN THIS AREA. HE ILLUSTRATED THE PROBLEM CITING 18 MONTHS REQUIRED FOR UNIVAC EXPORT LICENSE, "AN IMPOSSIBLE DELAY UNDER PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES." MIHUITA ADVANCED HIS PERSONAL HOPE FOR USG AND FIRMS TO CONSIDER FAVORABLE CREDIT TERMS, LOANS, ETC.

6. CLARIFYING POSSIBLE EMBASSY AND USG ROLES, AMB EXPLAINED EMBASSY WOULD ALERT DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE AND OTHER WASHINGTON AGENCIES TO NATURE OF PROBLEM AND URGE PRIORITY CONSIDERATION FOR APPROVAL OF EXPORT LICENSES FOR REPLACEMENT EQUIPMENT AS SOON AS APPLICATIONS WERE RECEIVED FROM SUPPLIERS. REGARDING INTERVENTION WITH PRIVATE FIRMS, AMB POINTED OUT THIS WAS MATTER OF PURELY COMMERCIAL RELATIONSHIP ALTHOUGH USDOC WOULD BE NOTIFIED WHICH FIRMS POTENTIALLY WERE INVOLVED.

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PAGE 03 BUCAR 02173 241131Z

7. EMBASSY POUCHING USDOC COPY OF MINISTRY'S TELEXES TO UNIVAC, IBM, BURROUGHS, CDC, HONEYWELL, NRC AND PERTEC, PLUS COVERING LIST OF DAMAGED EQUIPMENT SUBSEQUENTLY FURNISHED BY MIHUITA. PACKAGE TO COMMERCE ALSO CONTAINS BOUND PHOTO DOSSIER SHOWING DAMAGE TO COMPUTER CENTER.

8. COMMENT: BURADA'S IMPRECISION IN DEFINING THE KIND OF REQUESTED ASSISTANCE, OTHER THAN RAPID APPROVAL OF AN EVENTUAL EXPORT LICENSE APPLICATION, IS IN LINE WITH THE APPROACH OTHER SENIOR OFFICIALS HAVE ADOPTED FROM THE OUTSET. IT IS CLEAR THE ROMANIANS WOULD PREFER TO RECEIVE GRANTS OR DONATIONS FROM GOVERNMENTS OR FIRMS, BUT BARRING THIS FORM OF AID, THEY LIKELY WOULD BE SEEKING ANY OF A HOST OF OTHER VARIETIES OF HELP, RANGING FROM LOW-INTEREST OR NO-INTEREST GOVERNMENTAL LOANS OR SUPPLIER CREDITS DOWN TO ACCELERATED SHIPMENTS OF ITEMS PURCHASED UNDER NORMAL CREDIT TERMS.

9. FYI: ACCORDING TO UNIVAC REP CHIESA (VIENNA) WHO VISITED BUCHAREST IN RESPONSE TO MINISTRY'S TELEX, ROMANIANS ARE SEEKING UNIVAC BID BY MARCH 29 FOR INTEGRATED SYSTEM ENCOMPASSING PRESENT BATCH AND REAL-TIME CAPABILITIES OF CENTER'S PREVIOUS EQUIPMENT. COINCIDENTLY, UNIVAC GENERAL MANAGER IN VIENNA TRAVELLED TO WASHINGTON JUST AFTER MARCH 4 QUAKE AND REPORTEDLY GOT INFORMAL USDOC ASSURANCES THAT LICENSE APPROVAL FOR REPLACEMENT REPEAT REPLACEMENT EQUIPMENT MIGHT TAKE ONLY THREE MONTHS. CHIESA SAID, HOWEVER, THAT PRESENT REAL-TIME SYSTEM (BEWT CASE 146809) HAD BEEN FINAL TRIAL PHASE OF EXPANDABLE PROGRAM, AND THAT ROMANIANS, UNDER PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES, WERE NOW INDICATING INTEREST IN MUCH LARGER AND TOTALLY NEW CONFIGURATION. CHIESA SAID UNIVAC COULD MEET THE TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS BUT REALIZED THIS WOULD MEAN ESSENTIALLY NEW PROJECT WITH CORRESPONDING OBSTACLES AND CERTAINLY OF DELAY LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 04 BUCAR 02173 241131Z

IN OBTAINING EXPORT LICENSES. WE BELIEVE DEPARTMENT AND USDOC SHOULD BE AWARE THAT DISCUSSIONS OF THIS EVENTUALLY MAY ARISE WITH MANY FIRMS IN NEAR FUTURE. IN THIS CONNECTION, CDC AND IBM REPS HAVE JUST VISITED MINISTRY OF TRANSPORTATION, AND THEN INQUIRED AT EMBASSY ABOUT NATURE OF POSSIBLE USG AID RELEVANT TO COMPUTER CENTER. ROMANIANS HAVE ASKED BOTH THESE FIRMS TO SUBMIT BIDS BY END OF MARCH FOR EXPANDABLE REPLACEMENT SYSTEMS. IBM IS CONSIDERING CORPORATE "AID" IN FORM OF RAPID DELIVERY OF INTERIM BATCH PROCESSING CAPABILITY AS PART OF TENDER. END COMMENT.

10. ACTION REQUESTED: WOULD APPRECIATE USDOC CONFIRMATION OF CHANCES FOR ACCELERATED LICENSE APPROVAL FOR REPLACEMENT EQUIPMENT ONLY. WE APPRECIATE THAT USDOC WOULD NOT BE IN POSITION TO GIVE ANY REACTION ON ANY EXPANDED SYSTEM, PARAMETERS OF WHICH ARE STILL TO BE DEFINED.

BARNES

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: DATA PROCESSING EQUIPMENT, COMPUTERS, INFORMATION SYSTEMS, FOREIGN ASSISTANCE, EARTHQUAKES, BUILDING DAMAGE
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 24-Mar-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
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Disposition History: n/a
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vdkgvkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/0f4c20b3-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
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